

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SANA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8968
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANA 3050

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, KN, KS, US, YE
SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO PANMUNJOM INCIDENT

REF: STATE 211862

1. THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL REACTION TO PANMANJOM INCIDENT IN SANA AND PUBLIC REACTION AS WELL HAS BEEN VERY LIMITED. ONLY TIME WHEN INCIDENT RAISED DIRECTLY WAS AT MILITARY HEADQUARTERS. YARF OFFICERS WERE INTERESTED MORE IN WHAT US REACTION WOULD BE THAN IN DETAILS ON FINCIDENT PER SE.
 2. LITTLE COVERAGE GIVEN IN LOCAL MEDIA. RADIO CARRIED VERY BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENT INDICATING TWO AMERICANS AND THREE NORTH KOREANS (SIC) DIED DURING TREE CUTTING DISPUTE IN BUFFER ZONE. LATER NEWS BROADCAST DELETED ERRONEOUS KOREAN CASUALTY FIGURES. NO NEWS AGENCY COVERAGE OF INCIDENT CARRIED IN LOCAL PRESS.
 3. WHAT HAS NOT BEEN LOW-KEY HAS BEEN NORTH KOREA'S EXTENSIVE EFFORTS TO GAIN SUPPORT FOR ITS DITORTED VERSION OF EVENTS. TWO STATEMENTS CIRCULATED TO VARIOUS EMBASSIES AND GOVERNMENT OFFICES AROUND TOWN, ONE OF WHICH WAS NORTH KOREAN PRESS RELEASE. LANGUAGE OF BOTH EXTREMELY PROVOCATIVE AND BITROLIC AND STRONGLY ANTI-US IN TONE.
 4. NORTH KOREAN EMBASSY ALSO PLACED LONG OFFICIAL STATEMENT -- SO HAEDLINED -- IN AUGUST 26 ISSUE OF SANA'S AL-THAWRA NEWSPAPER.
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THIS STTEMENT MUCH MORE MODERATE IN TONE THAN EARLIER PRONOUNCEMENTS.

IT DID NOT MENTION PANMUNJOM INCIDENT BUT CONCENTRATED ON CONDEMNATION
OF MILITARY MANEUVERS AND MOBILIZATION TRAINING FOR WAR BEING
CONDUCTED BY SOUTH KOREA AND QUOTE ITS ALLIES UNQUOTE. NO MENTION
MADE OF US MY NAME. SUCH OFFICIAL EMBASSY STATEMENTS IN LOCAL PRESS
RARE IN YAR AND IT ASSUMED KOREANS PAID GRATIHETIES TO APPROPRIATE
AL-THAWRA AUTHORITIES IN ORDER SECURE PLACEMENT.

5. COMMENT. ALTHOUGH MOST YEMENIS SEEM SYMPATHETIC TO US ACCOUNTING
OF PANMUNJOM INCIDENT, THIS WILL PROBABLY HAVE NO EFFECT
ON YARR VOTE ON KOREAN ISSUE AT UN. THIS VOTE WILL BE DETERMINED BY
DEVELOPMENTS IN THE BILATERAL REALTIONS BETWEEN YAR
AND EACH OF THE TWO KOREAS, AND AT THE PRESENT TIME RELATIONS WITH
NORTH KOREA APPEAR TO BE GOOD IN SPITE OF THE POSTPONEMENT
OF PRESIDENT HAMDI'S PLANNED AUGUST VISIT TO PYONGYANG.
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